Volume 1, Issue 20   Atari Online News, Etc.   July 16, 1999

=~=~=~=

A-ONE #0120   07/16/99

   ~ Bristol Sues Microsoft ~ People Are Talking!   ~ Aniplayer Update!
   ~ VM Labs Quells Rumors! ~ Disney Gets InfoSeek! ~ AtariIRC Upgrade

   ~ THQ To Do 'Summoner'! ~ Intellivision Classics ~ NSC's New Chip!
   ~ Postal Service Online! ~ Gen Con Game Fair '99! ~ Light Beams?

                  -* Panel Passes Encryption Bill *-
                -* Hackers Challenge Antivirus Software *-
              -* McCain Calls For Permanent Internet Tax Ban *-

```
                                      =~=~=~=
```

->From the Editor's Keyboard   "Saying it like it is!"
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""

What a week! The weather cooled off nicely this past week, but it appears
that the hot and sticky weather will be back with us this weekend. It looks
like the pool will get a good workout again! I've even been trying to
purchase an air conditioner for my study; but that turned out to be a lesson
in futility. Maybe I'll be able to find one by September...

Speaking of futility, I'm still amazed when I hear people praising peecees
and Windows software. For the life of me, I can't understand why. Classic
computers, such as an an Atari, may be outdated and slow, but they sure are
simple to use without the same level of simplicity in functionality.

Back in January, I purchased a PC for my wife. It took a long time just to
be able to get online with it. Thanks to some Delphi online friends, I
finally got connected. Well, I was able to pick up a secondhand PC for
myself (I needed more speed for the vast amount of Internet work for A-ONE).
Since I couldn't pass up the price; and I now had space for it once I shut
down my BBS, I grabbed it. Forget about the mess UPS made of it during
shipping! That's fixed. And I was able to get it connected to my ISP
(Delphi) easily. But try to get anywhere else? Forget it. My e-mailer
won't connect. Internet Explorer won't connect. My CompuServe software
won't connect. And my settings are identical to those on my wife's machine!
On the plus side, I'm able to play a mean game of Hearts! <sigh>

I'm sure my problems are partly due to user stupidity. But it shouldn't be
this difficult to configure a few simple steps and have the programs do what
you want! <g> Maybe I need to find one of the neighborhood 8-year-olds and
let him help! Nah, I think I'll work with my Delphi friends and see what
they can do to help. At least I know they've all been in my shoes when they
first started.

Well, the humidity and temperature is rising in this part of the world, so I
had better finish up before everything starts to melt, including me. Oh,
before I forget, I want to apologize to our web side readers regarding Issue
#0118. The ASCII artwork pertaining to the hard drive article was mangled
when translated to HTML. I didn't notice it until it was too late. So, if
you're wondering what all of that "gibberish" meant, grab the text version
from one of the web sites listed above.

Until next time...

                    MagiC Documentation Project Finished

From: Kevin Savetz <savetz@northcoast.com>

Programmers that aren't all that familiar with the German language can finally have access to MagiC documentation thanks to Pete West, Guy Harrison and a few others that has been working on this for a while now.

As stated on their page the docs are "offered as is, free for the benefit of the Atari community."

http://www.whalley.demon.co.uk/atari/mdp/index.html

[This news item courtesy of http://www.atari.org
  and Joakim Hvgberg - http://gokmase.atari.org]

AtarIRC v1.03 Released

The STiK IRC client AtarIRC by Lonny L. Pursell has once again been updated. It is a bugfix release again.

http://www.bright.net/~atari/

[This news item courtesy of http://www.atari.org
  and Jan Daldrup - http://xonline.atari.org]

Aniplayer 2.07 Released

The multimedia player Aniplayer has been updated to version 2.07. New in this release: AVI/MOV export (rle) of AVI/MOV/FLI and MPG movies, updated sound configuration with digital output support (not tested), updated display configuration and bugfixes. Aniplayer is shareware.

http://aniplay.atari.org/

POV 3.1g Released

Persistence Of Vision 3.1g has been compiled for all ATARI machines. The news for the ATARI version is that the timer is now accurate to 1 second. All other news are the same that the official 3.1g. Have fun with it. This image synthesis software is more powerful.

http://eureka.atari.org

GSExec 1.01 GEM Script Interpreter Released

GSExec is a new GEM Script interpreter by Harald Becker based on a C like language which has its' roots in the macro language of the popular text editor JAnE. It is not as feature packed as the ASH Scripter but probably in a future version (feedback is very welcome).

GSExec is fairware.

                           =~=~=~=

                       PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                      compiled by Joe Mirando
                       jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Wow, this has been a nasty week. It seems
that every job finished leads to two or three others that are even more
difficult and more stressful. It's gotten so that I now ask, "What's the
NEXT single most important job we've ever had?"

Time is closing in on us everywhere we look these days. It seems that
the very things that we've created to give us more time are beginning to
suck the time away from us like a huge digital vacuum cleaner. I
remember reading somewhere that prehistoric man required about twenty
hours to attain everything that his family needed for an entire week. Of
course, there were no computers, VCRs, automobiles, condominiums, or any
other modern conveniences, but the fact remains that our prehistoric
relatives had much more time to pursue their interests than we do.

I'm not saying that I'd be willing to give up any of my modern
conveniences, but it does kind of put things in perspective.

I'm warning you now that this is going to be a short column, but I'm
guessing that you'll get over it quickly enough. <grin>

Well, let's get on with the news, hints, tips, and info available on our
favorite NewsGroup...

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
====================================

'Gordie' posts: "I have been using MagiC 6 for some time and noticed a
program in the GEMDESK directory called MOD_APP.TTP.Does anyone know
what this program is used for and how to use it?"

That's a good question... I've wondered about that myself. Well, John
Whalley tells Gordie (and me):

"From the newly translated MagiC programming docs:
----------------------8<---------------------------- What is it for?

When installing a program, usually by means of an installation-program,
this should not only copy all the associated program files to the hard
disk, but also "introduce" the new program to the system. Under GEM/TOS
this process is traditionally called "Install application" and had to be
performed manually up till now.

MOD_APP.TTP is a small program that takes on this task. It modifies the

MagiC system files that contain the application information, inclusive
of the icon assignments. The changes become active automatically at the
next start of the AES.
----------------------8<------------------------------

So basically it's for use by some installation programs."

Gordie tells John:

"Thanks for that...I downloaded the MagiC programming docs and found it
a very interesting read. I find that the docs can be useful for non
programmers as well as programmers."

Paul Nurmienen posts:

"A couple weeks ago I mentioned my occasional problem of CAB 2.7
freezing up the FIRST TIME I try to use it after booting a COLD computer
(after that it works fine). Remember?

Anyway, I figured out what the problem is.

*However, I would also mention that someone here (I forgot who)
mentioned a problem with CAB and the DSP loader as a response to my
original question - which helped lead me to the cause and work around
solution.

Thanks!

It appears to be some sort of conflict between MagiC 5 and the DSP JPEG
loader from Brainstorm. I say it's a conflict of these two things
because I don't get the freeze ups under normal TOS. And the Nemesis
isn't a factor either as I had originally thought. And it isn't just CAB
2.7 that freezes the computer (which is one of the things that helped me
figure this out). I also use the DSP loader in Image Copy 4 (which
obviously allows you to use it for faster JPEG loading). If it's the
first bootup of the day on my Falcon, and I run Image copy and try to
load a JPEG - freeze up city. However, much like the freeze ups with
CAB, after a reboot, I can view as many JPEGs using the DSP loader as I
want. It's just the first attempt after booting a cold computer that
causes the freeze up.

This can also be seen when using the JPEG.ACC that comes with the DSP
loader. When I had that viewer installed as an application for JPEGs on
the desktop (a while back), the computer would occasionally freeze up
when attempting to view a JPEG. I could never figure out why, but I
knew it only happened under MagiC.

At the time, I just uninstalled it as an application, and used something
else instead. And back then I was still using CAB 2.5, and I wasn't
using the DSP loader JPEG OVL - so that's why CAB never froze up!

So it's not a CAB 2.7 problem, or a CAB 2.5 problem. It's a DSP JPEG
loader [under MagiC] problem. Take away MagiC 5, no problem.

Now, I refuse to give up use of the DSP loader because the speed
difference is MAJOR (especially with Nemesis). So I've figured out a
little work around: If it's the first time I turn on the Falcon that
day, I'll boot with MagiC 5 and Nemesis, load CAB 2.7, connect with
STinG, then begin loading a web site (usually my own since I know it
uses a couple JPEGs on the home page).

However, I only let it bring it a small amount of data, then click "STOP" in CAB. After that, I reload the page, and everything works as it should. No freeze ups. Problem (more or less) solved! I hope this helped someone besides me.

But, can anyone tell me WHY this DSP JPEG loader only chokes the first time you try to use it, then works fine thereafter!?!?"

Pascal Ricard tells Paul:

"Ah! I do have the problem with plain Tos too (4.04).

Maybe you could just view a JPEG with another app using the decoder, say 1STGuide, and then no more need to get connected with all the drawbacks in case of a freeze. And it's far quicker than launching Cab.

I don't know [why it happens]y. I have also the problem with at least one soft using the DSP and not needing the Brainstorm's decoder."

Paul tells Pascal:

"I think you misunderstood. I don't use CAB when I just want to view a JPEG. I use either Image Copy 4, or any of a number of other viewers. What I meant by my statement above is that when using CAB for web browsing, the DSP-JPEG.OVL is __much__ faster than the normal CAB JPEG_OVL. Therefore, I want to continue using the DSP version in CAB for decoding JPEGs while browsing.

And when viewing JPEGs with Image Copy 4, it also makes use of the DSP decoder to load the images faster, as does the little JPEG.ACC that is included in the DSP loader archive, as I mentioned before.

Maybe it's a DSP problem as well?"

Joakim Hogberg posts:

"I wonder if there is any reason why using copy raster (vdi-function 109) wouldn't work with MagiC-Mac? (The routines I use are taken from ictari-10 if somebody still got these lying around somewhere)

I use this function to enable fast redraws in a program I have been working on for a while now, and have been told that my blit-redraws won't work at all with MagiC-Mac.

This sounds very strange to me, as I myself have verified that everything is alright with geneva, n.aes, MagiC and MagiC-PC. Is there something special about MagiC-Mac that can cause problems like this?

I would really, really appreciate help on this one!"

Johan Klockars tells Joakim:

"I know for a fact that vro_cpyfm() works on my Mac at work under the MagiCMac demo, since I've run MGIF in quick VDI mode just fine. This is in 256 colours, though.

Depending on what you mean by 'redraws', blitting may not be the way to go on machines with graphics acceleration.

It can be very slow to copy data from the screen to RAM and back again, while normal drawing operations can be fast as lightning.

(fVDI/mach64 does it's best to optimize such things, though, by actually not doing the copy to normal RAM. Instead it uses free internal memory on the card. I'm not aware of any other VDI that does this, however.)

If you're rather talking about creating a complex image of some kind in RAM (such as for a game, perhaps), there isn't much choice, obviously, but at least you won't need to blit from the screen.

I assume you are aware of the usual problems with true colour graphics modes using vro_cpyfm()? That is, the bit order may differ from card to card and the only thing you can do with the normal VDI (NVDI and fVDI have a special function) is to set test pixels, blit them into normal RAM and see how they look (there's a nice library out there somewhere that will do all this for you, but I can't recall the name).

Do not assume that you can access the screen directly in any way. The screen address you can get from the Xbios may not necessarily have anything to do with the one the VDI uses (with a graphics card, the screen may not have an addressable frame buffer at all).

The main difference between MagiCMac and the rest you mention is that the others have an original Atari screen mode or emulate one."

Dr. Clu asks for the low-down on HSModem:

"Alright, how EXACTLY does HSModem work?

HSmodem (I would guess that stands for "High Speed" Modem) allows the serial port on the ST, that would otherwise run real sloppily at 9600 baud to work great at 14.4K.

Now can anyone tell me how it goes about doing this?

(And if anyone would like to jump to the next question I'm going to ask, why couldn't this be ported to the Atari 8-bit? I would love to get an 8-bit working reliably at.. oh, 9600 baud... WITHOUT a costly Black Box.)"

Ronald Hall tells the good doctor:

"Er, thats not quite right. Any Atari ST can run at 19.2 just fine, with no problems. HSModem will allow even a stock ST to run at faster speeds (like 28.8). I think it does work best with a RSVE serial port upgrade board. I had one hooked up to my Mega ST with an Adspeed accelerator at one point, and 28.8 was just fine. No dropped chars., or anything like that. Pretty cheap and easy upgrade too.

It patches TOS's buggy serial port routines.

Sorry, can't help with that [the 8-bit]. However, it seems like I've seen/heard of quite a few 8-Bitters (God bless'em all!) running at 19.2 on extra hardware. Especially some of the Sysops (who are a whole different breed-I should know!) <very big grin>"

"Technoid Mutant" posts:

"It has been a few weeks since my last foray into this newsgroup. I was
trying to get Mint 1.4.1 running.

I have MiNT running very well now and have a ppp connection working as
well. I am very happy with it but have quite a few questions I have not
been able to resolve myself. First, I am running Mint 1.4.1 on an Mega
ST4 (not ste) with no modifications on a color monitor. My interface is
an ICD Link II using the drivers that came with the interface.

How do I get my CDROM drive running?

HSMODEM causes two bombs at boot if I load Mint. if not, it appears to
load and work fine. I am interested in HSmodem because my 9600bps modem
has v.42bis compression and I need 38.4kbps to use it fully. It works,
but will drop chars and hang up after a little while receiving. At the
moment I have the modem at 9600bps with speed buffering and compression
disabled (at&q0&k0) which works but is not as fast as it could be. I
have tried juggling the order of Mint.PRG and the two hsmodem prg files
in my auto folder to no avail. No other auto programs are being used.

I got Gluestick running but don't quite know what to do with CAB yet. I
am working on it.

How do I read/set the time on my mega st 4's real-time clock in MiNT?

ChronD causes a 'BUSS' error at startup. So far harmless but why? Is it
not for old 68000?

The 'auto reboot' function at boot after a disk check causes a buss
error - harmless.

WHO from the cli causes a 'BUSS error' and will not execute.

Date causes a 'buss error' and will not execute.

PPPD overwrites the console screen and scrambles GEM (AES 4.1). I have
to change to low res and then back to medium to clear the gui.

Sometimes VI will go crazy and start typing chars to itself ruining my
session. I open another virtual console and KILL the task and
everything is fine again... no biggie.

BIGGIE - I am trying to update to Mintnet 1.03 and my machine generates
a "virtual memory exhausted" when I 'MAKE ALL" or "MAKE INSTALL".

How do I update to a later version of mintnet? I have disabled all
virtual consoles in ttytab to gain ram which resolved an 'out of memory'
compile error, but now I have this virtual memory error which has me
stymied. Where is the virtual ram (swap)? Is it a file? How do I
define it's size?

Where is the configuration for mail and for news?

How do I upgrade my Mega ST4 to more than 4mb? Will MiNT recognize such
an upgrade?'

Nick Bales tells the Mutant:

"Don't forget, for HSModem on a Mega ST, you need just DRVIN.PRG and

MFP.PRG. DRVIN.PRG must always run before MFP.PRG. Not sure if MiNT
should run before or after those. Next, the ST's serial ports are
limited to 19200bps, with or without HSModem. See the post above (or
below) about HSModem. If you want to go faster than this, you will need
to perform a hardware modification on the ST's motherboard.

With that speed you should be able to get a clean 14400Kbps connection.

I've no idea about old 9600bps modems.

There is only one board that allows you to upgrade to 16Mb, it the
german Magnum board (from Woller I think ?). It requires TOS 2.06 and is
pretty expensive."

 Well folks, I told you this would be a short column. Have a good week,
and I'll see you back here again next time around. I really AM working
on the web page, but as I mentioned earlier, time is short right now.

'Till next time keep your ears open and always be ready to listen to
what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

                                =~=~=~=

->In This Week's Gaming Section - Intellivision Classics Revived!!
   """""""""""""""""""""""""""""   Star Wars 'Upgrade'!
                                    'Summoner'! And much more!

                                =~=~=~=

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
   """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

  Activision Gets Nostalgic with the Return Of Classic Intellivision Titles

        Intellivision Classics for the PlayStation Game Console Brings
                    30 Retro '80s Games Back to Life

Activision brings back the good old days of video gaming with Intellivision
Classics for the PlayStation game console. The compilation features
perfectly emulated platform versions of top-selling Intellivision games
including Football, Star Strike and Space Battle. Players will go back in
time and uncover 30 of the most treasured memories from the '80s -- classic

Intellivision games that bring a rush of nostalgia and good old-fashioned fun to the PlayStation game console for only $30. Intellivision Classics for the PlayStation game console is slated to be released in the fall of 1999.

''Intellivision Classics brings a collection of the best-loved, best-selling games from the popular 1980s Intellivision home console system to the PlayStation game console at an incredible value," stated Mitch Lasky, executive vice president, Activision Studios. ''This is one of the largest classic games collections ever and it includes more sports titles than other compilations. Players will experience the thrill of reliving video game history with perfect conversions of the original games."

With the use of emulation technology, each game featured in Intellivision Classics looks and plays exactly as it did on the original Intellivision console. Players can rocket through asteroid storms and alien attacks in Astrosmash; smack a long drive to bring the runners home in Baseball; and conquer battlefields in the full-throttle warfare of Armor Battle. A special ''video history" section includes interviews with some of the original programmers and designers. The Intellivision system was one of the most successful in the early '80s, with more than 3 million sold and over 100 games released.

''I think it's cool seeing the PlayStation game console, which is capable of 3-D graphics, millions of polygons and unlimited colors, running the Intellivision games," said Keith Robinson, president of Intellivision Productions, Inc. and an original programmer of Intellivision games and systems. ''It is exciting that Activision recognizes that these games are not just historically important to the industry but that they are still a lot of fun to play."

Intellivision Classics also includes such favorites as Space Armada, Auto Racing, Night Stalker, Pinball, Sub Hunt, Hockey and Stadium Mud Buggies.

                Back by Popular Demand, Intellivision Lives! Again
           Second CD-ROM Will Feature Games Produced by Activision

Intellivision was not a dinosaur. Okay, maybe the console was a little bulky, but its time on earth was definitely not limited to the early 1980s as was previously thought. The proof for this scientific discovery? The popularity of Intellivision Lives!(TM), an interactive CD-ROM for PCs and Macintosh that is filled with history of the early 1980s gaming history, information about the game programmers, and of course, the games themselves.

Because of the first CD-ROM's popularity (and countless requests), Intellivision Productions, Inc. has gained the rights to games made by Activision, Inc. and has begun work on a second CD-ROM, entitled Intellivision Lives! Volume 2. Intellivision Productions plans to release the CD-ROM in fall 1999. Volume 2 will contain more games Intellivision fans enjoyed playing on their console systems, including those produced by Activision, Imagic and Mattel Electronics. Games slated for the CD-ROM include: Beamrider, Dreadnaught Factor, Happy Trails, Microsurgeon, Truckin', Dracula, B-17 Bomber and Mind Strike.

''Back when we were programming at Mattel, naturally we checked out the Intellivision games that Activision and our other competitors were doing," said Keith Robinson, president, Intellivision Productions, Inc. and an

original programmer of Intellivision games and systems. ''And here's the secret: we loved a lot of those games and wished we had done them. We're excited that now we'll be able to release these games on Volume 2."

In addition to supplying Activision games for Intellivision Lives! Volume 2, the licensing agreement between the two companies provides Activision with use of all Intellivision games for its Intellivision Classics for the Playstation game console, slated to be released in fall 1999. The release by Activision will provide Intellivision fans with an additional way to play the games they love. Intellivision Classics will feature 30 games, including Football, Star Strike, Space Battle, Astrosmash and Baseball.

Intellivision Lives! Volume 2 is slated to contain:*

   -- Beamrider, Dreadnaught Factor, Happy Trails, Pitfall, River Raid, Stampede and Worm Whomper by Activision.
   -- Atlantis, Beauty and the Beast, Demon Attack, Dracula, Dragonfire, Fathom, Ice Trek, Microsurgeon, Nova Blast, Safecracker, Swords & Serpents, Tropical Trouble, Truckin' and White Water! by Imagic.
   -- Intellivoice games: Space Spartans, B-17 Bomber, Bomb Squad, Magic Carousel (previously unreleased) and Space Shuttle (previously unreleased).
   -- Mind Strike, ECS Baseball, Mr. Basic Meets Bits 'N' Bytes and Game Factory (previously unreleased) for the Intellivision Entertainment Computer System.

After the fall of Mattel Electronics, the maker of Intellivision, the game programmers (coined the Blue Sky Rangers), who were friends as well as coworkers, remained in touch. Annual reunions and newsletters kept the Rangers informed of each other's goings on, but the world heard little of them. (Rightfully) believing that they had an unique story to tell, Ranger Keith Robinson created the Blue Sky Ranger website in 1995. Because of the massive traffic and numerous requests for a way to play Intellivision games on today's computers, Robinson and fellow Ranger Stephen Roney founded Intellivision Productions, Inc. in 1996. They bought the rights to Intellivision system and games and made them PC and Macintosh compatible for millions to relive the excitement of Intellivision. Intellivision Lives! For more information, please visit the company website at www.intellivisionlives.com.
   * Included titles are subject to change.

                    Koei To Launch DVD Game For New Sony PlayStation

Koei Co Ltd , a major Japanese game software developer, said on Monday it plans to market a new game using digital video disc-ROM (DVD-ROM) technology for Sony Computer Entertainment's next-generation game machine by the end of the year.

The stock market gave a warm welcome to Koei's announcement, pushing its share price sharply higher to 2,790 yen by 0450 GMT, a rise of 390 or 16.25 percent.

The new game, named ''Kessen" or ''Battle," will be the first software to use DVD-ROM, which can hold about seven times more information than the CD-ROM technology used in Koei software designed for the first version of Sony's PlayStation machine.

DVD-ROM software provides clearer and more powerful visual images than CD-ROM, Koei said in a statement.

The first version of the PlayStation, a 32-bit game console, was introduced in December 1994 by Sony Computer Entertainment, the video game unit of Sony Corp .

Koei plans to launch the DVD-ROM game software by the end of the year to coincide with the launch of Sony's new souped-up game console, the PlayStation 2.

The price of the game has yet to be set, but a Koei spokesman said the firm was targetting annual global sales of one million units, its highest target ever.

THQ Partners With Renowned Game Developer Volition for 'Summoner', a Role-Playing Game of Epic Proportions

THQ Inc. announced Tuesday that it has partnered with revolutionary game developer Volition Inc., of the acclaimed ''Descent" franchise, to bring ''Summoner" to PC gaming enthusiasts worldwide.

Boasting astonishing graphics, completely 3-D environments and a rich RPG (role-playing game) storyline, ''Summoner" is scheduled for release in fall 2000.

''Today's announcement further demonstrates THQ's commitment to strengthening its position as an original content publisher by partnering with proven development groups," stated Michael Rubinelli, vice president of development, THQ. ''Volition is clearly one of the brightest, most innovative talents in our business."

''Our goal for 'Summoner' is to broaden the audience of the RPG category beyond the hardcore role-playing gamers to the casual gaming audience without diluting the core RPG gaming experience," stated Mike Kulas, president, Volition and one of the creators of the award- winning ''Descent" I and II.

''THQ's marketing and sales force have a proven track record in reaching every level of game player making them the ideal partner for 'Summoner."'

Players will adventure as Joseph, a young farmer who has inherited the power of summoning. With magical rings, a Summoner calls forth powerful demons, dragons and elementals to aid him on his quest. The story begins with the invasion of Joseph's homeland by the armies of the Emperor of Orenia.

Having learned of the Summoner's gift, the Emperor has dispatched his soldiers to kill Joseph, who must learn to master his power or face certain death. Searching for the rings, Joseph and his companions travel to the lost empire of Ikaemos, the island monastery of Iona, the forest labyrinth of Liangshan, and other fantastic locales.

''Summoner" evokes a rich, detailed universe filled with unique characters, spells and monsters. Breathtaking graphics and a user- friendly interface create an immersive gaming experience for players of all skill levels. ''Summoner" will also feature an innovative, party-based

multiplayer mode. For screenshots and regular updates, visit the
``Summoner" Web site at www.summoner.com.

LucasArts and Nintendo to Enable Players to Pilot Secret Naboo Starfighter
in Star Wars: Rogue Squadron July 16

Downloadable Patch and Cheat Code to Allow PC and Nintendo 64 Players
Access to New Naboo Fighter From Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace

LucasArts Entertainment Company LLC and Nintendo of America Inc. hand over
the controls of Anakin Skywalker's sleek and ultra swift Naboo starfighter
to owners of PC and Nintendo 64 versions of Star Wars: Rogue Squadron,
Friday, July 16.

Information about how to access the powerful Naboo starfighter, first seen
in the motion picture Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace, will be
available to PC players through www.lucasarts.com/products/rogue, and a
variety of interactive game web sites. Nintendo will simultaneously reveal
the cheat code to N64 owners at www.nintendo.com, and Nintendo Power
magazine.

Available for the first time in an interactive game, the highly agile Naboo
starfighter is armed with rapid-fire twin laser cannons, homing missiles,
and other upgradable weaponry. The starfighter's advanced hyperdrive engine
and superior handling characteristics will allow players to rapidly
out-maneuver their dreaded foes.

Acclaim CEO Bullish on Dreamcast Launch

Sega's Dreamcast promotional campaign has exceeded Acclaim Entertainment's
expectations, Acclaim Co-chairman/CEO Greg Fischbach tells mmWire.

"I think the short-term opportunities look good for Dreamcast in North
America," Fischbach says. Longer-term, success depends on Sony's [SNE]
PlayStation 2 plans, especially the price of the console, he tells us.
Acclaim is expecting about 700k Dreamcast units to ship domestically by
Christmas.

Dreamcast will add to Acclaim's revenue stream as it appeals to the
hardcore gamer and thus should not cannibalize PlayStation and Nintendo
software sales, Fischbach told analysts Thursday. A likely fall in price
to $99 for N64 and PSX will appeal to the casual or "Wal-Mart" gamer, he
added.

With five titles planned in the period between Dreamcast's September launch
and Christmas, Acclaim is one of the console's two key third-party
supporters. The other, Midway Home Entertainment, also plans five releases
in the same time-frame. Acclaim's first titles are Trickstyle and QBC 2000;
the former is part of Sega's in-theater marketing campaign (which features
just two other titles, both from Sega), so exposure should be strong,
Fischbach says.

Acclaim will provide strong support for Dreamcast throughout fiscal 2000,
which begins in September, Fischbach says. Acclaim plans to release 10-12

Dreamcast titles, about 12 PSX titles, 15 N64 titles, 10 PC titles and nine
Game Boy Color titles in the year, Fischbach told analysts late Thursday.

Dreamcast releases will be phased. "We're appealing to the straight
hardcore gamer who is interested in putting together a portfolio of
titles," Fischbach says. While this gamer might buy 16 to 18 titles a year,
"he's not going to buy them all the same day."

In a console's early stages, title life cycles are lengthened as
competition is limited and the installed base rises rapidly. For example,
Acclaim's Turok: Dinosaur Hunter, which shipped about six months after the
launch of N64, continued to sell for almost a year and a half, lasting
through two Christmas seasons, he notes. Sell-in numbers for Dreamcast
titles will be 75k-150k units, depending on the quality of the game.
Sell-through will reflect the number of hardware units in the marketplace,
he says.

Although Fischbach won't say whether Acclaim has received next-generation
development kits from Sony and Nintendo, the company plans to ship its
first PSX2 titles in fall 2000 (simultaneously with the console's expected
US launch) and its first Dolphin titles in fall 2001. In Thursday's analyst
call, Fischbach responded to suggestions that this date might reflect an
expectation that Nintendo's console will not meet its stated fall 2000 ship
date by saying it would take Acclaim until fall 2001 to finish Dolphin
titles regardless of Nintendo's launch calendar.

Acclaim has been porting some content from PC to Dreamcast, but "our
approach is to create uniquely for each of the next-gen platforms,"
Fischbach says. Additionally, while he won't reveal how he expects the
platforms to differ, he says Sony's and Nintendo's machines will have
distinct identities.

                              =~=~=~=

->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
  """"""""""""""""""""""

            Gen Con Game Fair '99 Descends On Milwaukee August 5-8

    Celebrity Participants Include Stars from Star Wars: The Phantom Menace
             and Willow, Star Trek and The Incredible Hulk

In a four-day annual extravaganza, the Gen Con Game Fair will return to
Milwaukee, August 5-8.

In its 32nd year as the largest game-play convention in North America, the
Gen Con Game Fair will fill the Wisconsin Center District (the equivalent
of two city blocks) and will showcase more than 3,000 games, from adventure
and strategy games to miniatures and computer games. In addition, Gen Con
will be brimming with a variety of celebrities from science fiction and
fantasy television and movie roles who will participate in Q&As with
attendees.

The celebrities featured at Gen Con '99 include actors, authors and artists. Lou Ferrigno, star of The Incredible Hulk; Warwick Davis of Willow, Return of the Jedi and Star Wars: The Phantom Menace fame; and Walter Koenig, who plays the role of Chekov in the Star Trek television series and movies, will all be present. Kevin J. Anderson, author of the best-selling Star Wars Jedi Academy trilogy, will also be on site. Fantasy artist for the Dragonlance and Forgotten Realms campaign settings, Keith Parkinson, as well as Kevin Conroy, the voice of Batman in the animated television series, will also attend. All celebrities will be available throughout the four-day convention to meet with attendees and/or autograph their work.

A plethora of additional activities are in store to keep Gen Con attendees of all ages immersed in their hobby all weekend, including opportunities to preview cutting-edge electronic games, participate in demonstrations of strategy, roleplaying, trading card, miniature and war games, and the chance to take home prizes and free giveaways. In the massive Exhibit Hall, Gen Con guests will be able to shop for games, art, books, comics, jewelry, clothing, memorabilia, videos and new product releases.

Other entertainment will include a costume contest, an art show, a Computer Gaming Center, musicians, jugglers, sword fighters and theatrical performances. On Fantastic Friday, participants can celebrate the world of comics and super heroes. Sci-Fi Saturday, presented by Amazing Stories, the first magazine of science fiction, is Gen Con's annual sci-fi convention-within-a-convention. Sci-Fi Saturday will feature ''A Century of Science Fiction" exhibit with authentic movie props, costumes and memorabilia from Paramount Studios, as well as seminars on writing for Star Trek and Star Trek live-action events.

Making a stop at Gen Con '99 will be the TSR Silver Anniversary Tour, a nationwide tour honoring the Dungeons & Dragons game and the legions of fans who play the game. The TSR Silver Anniversary Tour will bring with it a variety of activities for both long-time Dungeons & Dragons players and newcomers to the adventure game hobby. Special events include celebrity author and game designer autograph sessions, game demonstrations, game tournaments, contests (with prizes) as well as a ''Gaming through the Ages" art exhibit featuring a nostalgic and historical look at the artwork and game tools associated with the Dungeons & Dragons game over the past 25 years.

An additional benefit of this year's Gen Con gala will be its contribution to numerous charities. Back-to-school supplies will be donated to Strong Families, a subsidiary of United Way, and Toys for Tots will attend the event to collect new toys and games for underprivileged children. Members of the Girl Scouts of Milwaukee who participate in the Girl Scouts' Get SMART (Science, Math, Adventure, Research & Technology) program will comprise part of the Gen Con volunteer staff. Their program focuses on training troop leaders and improving Girl Scouts' math and science comprehension through entertaining and informative hands-on activities.

The Gen Con Game Fair will be open to the public daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday, August 5 through Sunday, August 8. The convention will take place in the Wisconsin Center District, located at 500 W. Kilbourn Avenue in downtown Milwaukee. This space encompasses the brand-new, 667,475-square-foot Midwest Express Center, the Arena and the Auditorium. These full-service convention and entertainment facilities are located near Milwaukee's downtown hotels and adjacent to the Grand Avenue retail center. Within walking distance are approximately 14,000 parking spaces and a myriad of dining, entertainment and retail venues.

On-site registration fees for the event are as follows:

$15 one-day Exhibit hall pass
$55 four-day all-convention pass
$40 two-day all-convention pass
$20 one-day all-convention pass

Admission is free for children under age nine. Pre-registration discounts
are both available and recommended. Gen Con attendees may pick up
pre-registration materials on site on Wednesday, August 4, from noon until
10 p.m. For more information, please call 800/529-EXPO.

                    VM Labs Quells NUON Death Fears

VM Labs has sought to allay fears of internal trouble following online
rumors of a financial crisis.

According to the company, the next generation hardware is ramping up for
launch and garnering increased support from the game and movie industry
alike. "Game and interactive title development has been steadily
progressing to ensure a rich collection of engaging software at launch,"
said Greg LaBrec, VM Labs' VP of marketing. "We've just returned from a
very successful Video Software Dealers Association trade show where we
strengthened our position with Hollywood and the video retail trade."

Whisperings had suggested a closure of the company was in the offing.
"There's absolutely no truth in the rumors whatsoever," LaBrec maintained.
"More unique NUON-enhanced DVD trick modes are being developed weekly, both
through the efforts of our internal engineering staff as well as the
talented engineers from our hardware partner companies."

VM Labs has placed no date on the release of the set-top-box, though strong
reports imply a definite 2000 schedule, despite earlier assurances of a
1999 showing. "We are beginning to solidify our launch and marketing plans
for the upcoming year, and we're still looking for some talented people to
round out our project personnel," LaBrec concluded.

                    Atari Video Club Announcement

From: DANAVC   To: ALL

Atari Video Club (AVC) has announced that starting with Vol 10, #1 of the
Fanzine that subscription rate will be $8.00 a year. This price increase
will reflect the raising cost of coping the fanzine.

Daniel M. Iacovelli, Chairperson and Founder of AVC, has mentioned
that in the past the subscription rate has gone up before to reflect the
price of the postage increase but the main reason behind this increase
(from five dollars to eight dollars a year) is to mostly cover
the cost of copying the fanzine.

He also mentions that the paper fee is the only thing to increase while
the membership fee, which was .80 cents, will go down to .30 cents (this

fee just rounds the total fee to nearest dollar).

Also the pages for the newsletter will now be limited and they can not go
over this limit (they can, however, go under; in which case the remaining
amount after the initial subscription has ended will be carried over to
membership fee): the limit for the 5 regular issues are 12 pages (or 6
sheets) the limit for the special Jagfest issue are 28 pages (or 14 sheets)
cost of copying is .10 cents for 2-sided sheets.

5 issues times 6 sheets times ten cents= 3.00
jagfest issue 14 sheets times ten cents = 1.40
total cost of coping 6 issues=4.40
+postage (six .33 cents stamps=1.98
six .22 cents stamps(x-postage))=1.32
total cost with postage=7.70
plus membership fee =.30
total= 8.00 .
(if in the case we can't fit a review or anything in the
fanzine that item will be carried over to the next fanzine
and in the current e-zine)

This still makes the Atari Zone fanzine the lowest priced bi-monthly
fanzine compared to other fanzines.

Also starting with the next volume AVC will no longer be giving
away free copies of the Jagfest issues at any of the fest, instead
we will be selling them at cost, which is 1.40 each, sixty cents less
then the cover price. We will be however accepting request for a free
copies 3 weeks before each fest.

If you have any questions about this price increase feel free to write
me and I'll answer best to my knowledge.

thank you

Daniel M. Iacovelli
Atari Video Club chairman
Editor of the Atari Zone Fanzine and E-zine
webmaster of AVC Online

mail: Dan@AVC
(ICQ #14050168)
AVC online=http://avconline.atari.org

                             =~=~=~=

                      A-ONE's Headline News
                 The Latest in Computer Technology News
                     Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

              Final Arguments To Start In Conn. Microsoft Trial

Closing arguments in the Microsoft Corp versus Bristol Technology Inc.

antitrust trial will be held Tuesday, lawyers said Monday.

The case will likely be handed to the nine-person jury in Bridgeport federal court Wednesday afternoon, climaxing a heated, ''David versus Goliath" trial that began on June 2.

Danbury, Conn.-based Bristol, a small firm with $8 million revenues, accuses the $14.5 billion Microsoft of trying to extend its alleged monopoly in desktop operating systems into the departmental-server and technical work station markets.

Bristol claims it was victimized by Microsoft's supposed "Trojan horse" strategy of gaining a foothold in the server and work-station markets and then killing off competition from the Unix operating systems.

But the Redmond, Wash.-based software giant argues that Bristol has taken a mere contract dispute and tried to dress it up with antitrust claims that simply do not hold water.

Bristol, a former source-code licensing partner of Microsoft's, seeks up to $263 million in damages.

Bristol makes a product called Wind/U, which acts as a bridge between developers writing software for computers based both on Microsoft's Windows and Unix. Bristol's original contract to license Microsoft source code -- the blueprint that tells computer programmers how a software program works -- expired in 1997.

The Bristol lawsuit is one of several legal actions Microsoft is battling around the country. Though the Bristol case is not related to the federal lawsuit brought by the U.S. Department of Justice and 19 attorneys general, it makes the similar claim that Microsoft is using its monopoly in the desktop market to crush competition.

Both Microsoft and Bristol expressed confidence in the trial's outcome.

''The evidence presented so far at trial clearly refutes all of Bristol's allegations and the facts show that Microsoft treated Bristol fairly, reasonably, and in a very pro- competitive manner," Tom Pilla, a Microsoft spokesman, told Reuters.

''The proof in the pudding is that Microsoft offered Bristol virtually the same (licensing terms) that we offered (Bristol competitor) Mainsoft (Inc.) and Bristol rejected those terms," Pilla said. ''Mainsoft testified at trial that those terms were reasonable and fair and they're doing quite well with their source-code licensing."

Bristol disagrees.

''We believe we've been able to convey all of the information and the facts that the jury would need to find for us on an antitrust violation," Bristol Chairman and Chief Executive Keith Blackwell told Reuters.

''Fortunately for us, many of those facts are directly from Microsoft's own documents and e-mails and videotapes."

''Even (Microsoft Senior Vice President) Jim Allchin's testimony did not try to contradict the fact that he had intentionally tried to narrow any new agreements drastically from the original commitment that Microsoft had to the market," Blackwell said.

Robert McTamaney, a veteran New York antitrust lawyer who is not connected to the case, said the Bristol suit is interesting because so few antitrust claims ever make it to the jury stage.

Jury Urged To Slap Microsoft With Huge Damages

A lawyer for a small Connecticut software firm Tuesday urged a federal jury to find Microsoft Corp. guilty of anti-competitive behavior and award massive damages against the software giant.

Danbury, Conn.-based Bristol Technology Inc. seeks up to $263 million in damages in an antitrust trial that began on June 3.

''The damages have to account for the fact that even if we get the (latest Microsoft) source code tomorrow, it wouldn't put Bristol back to where it was in September of 1997," Patrick Lynch, lawyer for Bristol, said in closing arguments.

A lawyer for Redmond, Wash.-based Microsoft called the suit "meritless" and said Bristol's top executives were simply "greedy."

U.S. District Judge Janet Hall is expected to hand the case to the nine-member jury Wednesday afternoon.

Bristol, with annual revenues of around $8 million, accuses Microsoft, with revenues of $14.5 billion a year, of trying to extend its alleged monopoly in desktop operating systems into the departmental-server and technical work station markets.

Bristol makes a product called Wind/U, which acts as a bridge between developers writing software for computers based both on Microsoft's Windows and on the competing Unix operating system.

Bristol's original contract to license Microsoft source code -- the blueprint that tells computer programmers how a software program works -- expired in September 1997.

Lynch told jurors that Bristol was a victim of Microsoft's alleged plot to penetrate the server and work station markets and then crush competition from Unix.

''Microsoft engaged in a classic bait and switch, in which the bait was its monopoly power in the personal computer market and the switch was tearing down the bridge (between Windows and Unix)," Lynch said.

''Microsoft engaged in the leveraging of monopoly power in one market to exclude competition or get the upper hand in a second market," he said.

Microsoft's refusal to supply Bristol with a new source code at a reasonable price came as a shocking double-cross to Bristol, which was about to see its small business skyrocket, Lynch said.

''These folks built their business from their garage, to the point where it was about to blossom into something very big," he said.

''The baby was not allowed to be born. We don't know whether the baby was

Abraham Lincoln or ("Mad" magazine mascot) Alfred E. Neuman. We never got a chance to see that baby because Microsoft stomped on it."

Bristol has said its $263 million in requested damages is based on the company's projected profits between March 1997 and December 2006, including software bundling contracts with original equipment manufacturers.

Microsoft, however, compared Bristol's case to, ''the pouting of young children, (who say) 'We're entitled to all of Microsoft's source code," David Tulchin, lawyer for Microsoft, told the jury.

''What about the aspect of greed? Two-hundred sixty-three million dollars?" Tulchin said with disbelief in his voice.

Bristol was simply pursuing a ''sue Microsoft for money" business plan, Tulchin said. He said Bristol co-founders Keith and Jean Blackwell -- a husband and wife team who own 38 percent of the company -- would be entitled to $99.9 million of a $263 million award. ''That's their stake in the outcome," he said.

''This case is a very serious one, not just for the plaintiff, but for Microsoft, given the consequences of being adjudged a monopolist," Tulchin said.

''This case is about a situation where Bristol chose to litigate and Microsoft wanted to negotiate."

Tulchin said Microsoft continues to act in good faith with Bristol, which he pointed out was entitled to use Microsoft's original source code in perpetuity. He also told jurors that Bristol's competitor, Mainsoft Inc., licensed new source code from Microsoft under the same terms that Bristol turned down.

U.S. Jury Ends 2nd Day Of Deliberations On Microsoft

A federal jury in Connecticut Thursday ended its second day of deliberations in a trial to decide whether Microsoft Corp. violated U.S. antitrust laws.

Bristol Technology Inc., a small Connecticut software firm, claims that Microsoft flouted antitrust laws by refusing to negotiate a new contract for Windows source code.

Bristol also alleges that the software giant illegally leveraged its monopoly power in personal computer operating systems to monopolize markets for operating systems in technical work stations and departmental servers.

Earlier jurors asked to have some testimony read back to them. The jury was scheduled to return Friday morning.

Closely held Bristol, which had 1998 revenues of $8 million, seeks up to $263 million in damages from Microsoft. Microsoft has called the claims meritless, and has said that Bristol's top executives are simply pursuing a "sue-Microsoft-for-money business plan."

The U.S. District Court trial in Bridgeport, Conn., began on June 3, and the case was handed to the jury Wednesday afternoon.

U.S. District Judge Janet Hall Thursday excused one juror, reducing the size of the jury to eight from nine.

The jury asked to hear testimony by a University of Connecticut economist read back to them.

A court official read aloud remarks by Professor Richard Langlois, a witness for Bristol, who testified on his definition of ''relevant markets" for operating systems: personal computers, technical work stations, and departmental servers.

Bristol makes a product called Wind/U, which acts as a bridge between developers writing software for computers based both on Microsoft's Windows and on the competing Unix operating system.

Bristol's original contract to license Microsoft source code -- the blueprint that tells computer programmers how a software program works -- expired in September 1997.

Microsoft is fighting three separate antitrust cases around the country, and the Connecticut case is likely to be the first to receive a verdict.

The trial is unrelated to charges still pending in federal court in Washington. The government alleges that Microsoft holds monopoly power in Windows operating systems, and that the company illegally used that power to compete unfairly.

A ruling is not expected in the U.S. government case for several months.

In addition, Utah-based Caldera Inc. accuses Microsoft of using unfair tactics to destroy a competitor to Microsoft's MS-DOS operating system. A trial is expected to start early next year.

Disney Acquires Rest of Infoseek

The Walt Disney Co. is taking over Infoseek, an early arrival on the Internet scene, in an effort to consolidate its online operations into one enterprise that can leverage the power of Disney's entertainment brands in cyberspace.

Disney is merging all of its Internet operations together with Infoseek to form a new company called go.com. That's also the name of a portal site the two companies launched together late last year, which has been facing stiff competition from leading portals like Yahoo! and AOL.com.

Disney has had success with its various Internet holdings, which include Web sites for its ESPN cable channel, the ABC television network and sites related to its theme parks. But the company had not yet brought all these assets together under one roof.

''We are positioning ourselves to lead in this space," Disney chairman Michael Eisner said Monday at a New York news conference announcing the deal. ''We're taking the Disney brand and letting it evolve into the next century."

Analysts viewed the deal as positive for Disney, but cautioned that a lot of hard work lay ahead for the company in terms of making the most out of

its media holdings and shaping a clearer Internet strategy.

''They have a way to go before becoming a mainstream portal site," said Charlene Li, senior analyst Forrester Research in Cambridge, Mass. ''Disney has a great name, but they haven't been able to capitalize on it."

Disney investors gave tepid approval to the deal, edging the company's shares up 183/4 cents $27.811/4 as one of the most active issues on the New York Stock Exchange. Disney's shares have suffered this year due to an earnings slowdown.

But Infoseek shareholders were clearly disappointed in the deal's outcome, and may have been hoping for better terms. Infoseek shares were off $5.561/4, or by nearly 11 percent, at $45.933/4 in heavy Nasdaq trading.

Disney bought 42 percent of Infoseek last year, and announced a month ago that it was interested in getting control of the rest. Under terms of the deal, Infoseek shareholders will receive 1.15 shares of the new company, which will be a special class of Disney stock.

Go.com will also include Disney's catalog operation, which could provide key support for any online retail operations down the road. Some Internet companies have struggled with the mechanics of online sales.

One key point of concern among industry analysts and investors was the lack of a new management team for the new company. Harry Motro is leaving as president Infoseek after the merger is completed, and it's not clear who will replace him.

''They clearly need to have a management in place quickly," said James Preissler, an Internet analyst at PaineWebber. ''It's a very complex business and they're starting out from a behind position. They're going to have to run very hard, very quickly in order to catch up to big players like Yahoo."

The new company will have revenues of approximately $350 million. Eisner said Disney has not set a goal for when the company would turn a profit, but he tried to allay any concerns that go.com might follow the well-trod path of many Internet companies that seem to place a higher priority on building market share than making money.

''We are not out-of-control Internet people," Eisner said. ''We believe that it's a good idea to have profits."

Disney is also pursuing other opportunities in cyberspace. Last month, Disney announced that it was taking a ''significant" stake in a venture called eCompanies that will serve as an incubator for Internet startups. ECompanies was formed by Jake Winebaum, who had a key role in building Disney's own Internet efforts.

Disney' Internet push provides a much-needed piece of good news for the company, which just last week settled a bitter and protracted legal battle with Jeffrey Katzenberg over how much Katzenberg was due when he left Disney to form another studio.

                          McCain Calls for Internet Tax Ban

Republican presidential candidate John McCain told an audience of conservatives he firmly opposes Internet sales taxes, but softened his stance later when addressing reporters, saying the issue needs more study.

Seeking to distinguish himself from Texas Gov. George W. Bush, who is still considering the issue, McCain said flatly in a speech Wednesday he favors a ban on Internet taxes.

''The ban must be permanent," McCain said. ''Because you can be sure that the special interests that yearn to tap the cash cow to finance their projects will (gain) a competitive advantage through friendly rules and will pay their soft money dues to pursue the prize."

Yet asked for the details of his proposal after the speech, McCain deferred to the Advisory Commission on Electronic Commerce. Congress created the panel last year to study Internet tax policy.

''I think we ought to look at the results of this commission before I would take a hard position on it," McCain, an Arizona senator, said.

''But I believe that when you look at the jobs and the revenue that are created as a result of this industry, this technology, we ought to seriously consider not imposing taxes on it."

Congress last year imposed a three-year moratorium on new federal, state and local electronic commerce taxes, which expires in October 2001. Aides said McCain at the time favored a permanent ban.

During a campaign swing here last week, Bush spokeswoman Karen Hughes said the Texas governor is still considering whether commerce on the Internet should be taxed.

McCain spoke in this city six days after Bush did, and he echoed Bush on several high-tech issues. But he tailored his stump speech on campaign finance reform to the area's high-tech industry and traced many of its headaches to the influence of ''special interests."

McCain wants to abolish soft money, the unlimited contributions made by corporations and interest groups to party committees to influence campaigns. He is seeking a Senate vote on a bill he co-wrote that would do that.

He bemoaned a shortage of skilled foreign workers allowed into the country, and he denounced the nation's ''out-of-control" civil justice system.

Like Bush, McCain attacked the Clinton administration for dragging its feet on a bill approved last week that would make it harder to sue companies for Y2K-related problems. The White House repeatedly threatened to veto such bills, but President Clinton said last week he will sign it.

Like Bush, McCain called for freer international trade. Silicon Valley seeks lower international trade barriers, and McCain proclaimed himself ''the most free-trading anti-protectionist you will ever see in the United States Senate."

But in an implicit challenge to Bush, McCain delivered his speech at the Hoover Institution, a conservative think tank based at Stanford University that is home to at least 10 Bush policy advisers. At least one was in the audience.

U.S. House Intelligence Panel Passes Encryption Bill

The House Intelligence Committee Thursday approved legislation to relax
strict U.S. export limits on computer data scrambling technology, watering
down some of the bill's provisions but not adding a controversial amendment
opposed by high-tech companies and privacy advocates.

Two years ago, the committee amended a similar measure to require that all
data scrambling products include a ''back door" allowing law enforcement
and national security agencies to decode any message.

But Thursday, the committee decided not to add such a provision, which
companies argue is technically difficult and costly to meet and privacy
advocates fear would lead to surveillance abuses.

The committee did weaken the bill's relaxation of export limits on data
scrambling, or encryption, products. The committee also added a provision
allowing the government to require contractors to use encryption with
''back door" access in dealings with the government.

Three House committees have already approved the legislation with stronger
export limit relief.

The Intelligence Committee's version is not expected to be considered when
the full House considers the bill, likely in the fall. The House Rules
Committee is expected to send a version with stronger export relief
approved by other committees to the House floor.

None the less, supporters of greater encryption exports said the
Intelligence panel's change of heart from two years ago signaled the
strength of effort to relax the export limits.

''We've come a long way in two years," said Alan Davidson, staff counsel
at the nonprofit Center for Democracy and Technology. ''It's a significant
shift for the debate. The experts and the marketplace have demonstrated
that mandatory plain text access doesn't work."

Encryption has become an increasingly critical means of securing global
communications and electronic commerce over the Internet. But law enforcers
and national security agencies fear criminals and terrorists will use
encryption to hide their nefarious activities.

The Clinton administration has taken a compromise approach, allowing weak
encryption products to be exported with exceptions for sales to companies
in certain industries like banking and health care. The administration has
allowed exports of strong encryption products that included a back door
access feature.

The bill being considered by the House, authored by Virginia Republican Bob
Goodlatte, would allow exports of any product that was generally available
from non-U.S. companies.

The Intelligence Committee junked that provision, replacing it with a rule
allowing export of medium strength products as long as the sellers reported
to the government who they sold the products to.

Companies have in the past opposed such a requirement, which is difficult

to follow for mass market software like Web browsers or e-mail programs
that are sold in retail stores and over the Internet to millions of
customers.

The Intelligence version of the bill would also allow the President to
permit stronger encryption exports if doing so would not harm national
security.

Hackers Challenge Antivirus Software

Computer security companies updated their virus-detection software on
Sunday after the in-your-face launch at a hackers convention of a new tool
designed for stealth invasions of networks operated by Microsoft Windows.

Despite the rapid response, however, any defense against the hacking
program may prove fleeting thanks to some aggressive tactics taken by the
tool's authors, an irreverent group named Cult of the Dead Cow, or CDC.

The hacking tool, called ''BO2K," can enable someone to gain control of a
computer or network from a remote location. BO2K is an abbreviation for a
slightly profane variation of ''Back Office," the name of a program in
Microsoft's Office 2000 suite of business software.

The CDC and other hackers attending the seventh annual ''DefCon"
convention in Las Vegas charged that Microsoft has stubbornly refused to
address a multitude of gaping security holes in Windows.

By exploiting those vulnerabilities, hackers hope to force the world's
largest software company to repair them. And, raising the ante another
notch, the CDC is also releasing the software code for BO2K - inviting
other programmers to create mutations that would frustrate efforts to
immunize computers against attack.

But that vigilante-type ''hactivism" was rejected by Microsoft and federal
officials, including many who attended DefCon under cover - at least until
they were unmasked during the convention's popular ''Spot the Fed"
contest.

BO2K is actually an update to a hacking tool released at last year's DefCon
hackers convention. The first tool targeted the Windows 95 and Windows 98
operating systems that run an overwhelming majority of the world's desktop
computers.

Much to the delight of the nearly 1,000 anti-Microsoft enthusiasts who
crammed into the BO2K launch Saturday, the new tool can also hijack control
of network systems using Windows NT, a top program for running computer
networks, as well as computers running on test versions of the as-yet
unreleased Windows 2000.

''Our position is that Windows is a fundamentally broken product," said
Deth Veggie, the CDC's ''minister of propaganda." Like nearly every
hacker, Veggie only identifies himself by his online pseudonym, partly for
effect and partly out of legal concerns. ''Hopefully, this will force them
to fix this thing."

The government-chartered Computer Emergency Response Team at Carnegie

Mellon University in Pittsburgh is investigating B02K, but has not issued any advisory or warning.

The hacking tool ''is one of several programs which, if installed on an organization's computers, can give control of the computers to outsiders with malicious intent," Jeffrey J. Carpenter, senior incident responder for the CERT, said Sunday. Because BO2K works with Windows NT, ''intruders have the potential to gain control of more sensitive server machines."

By Sunday morning, leading computer security firms such as Symantec and Network Associates had already posted advisories and detection software for BO2K on their Web sites.

Microsoft had been blasting BO2K even before Saturday's highly theatrical presentation, which relied heavily on thumping industrial music, strobe lights and screaming - a bizarre mutation of the dog and pony shows that often accompany a Microsoft product launch.

''I certainly categorize what they're trying to do as being malicious. This program they have created has absolutely no purpose except to damage users," said Jason Garms, lead product manager for Windows NT security, complaining that hackers behave as if the Internet operates under a different set of rules than the rest of the world.

Functions Of PC Put On Single Chip

National Semiconductor Corp. today unveiled a new computer chip that puts most of the functions of a PC on a single chip, a move that will bring more power and functionality to small information devices.

The new Geode SC1400 chip will do the work of what would normally require six different chips, company spokeswoman Linda Ashmore said.

National Semiconductor is targeting the chip for use in ''information appliances" such as television set-top boxes, hand-held information devices such as the Palm Pilot, and, eventually, car navigation systems.

According to the industry research firm International Data Corp., the information appliance market will reach a worldwide shipment of 65 million units in 2003.

The Santa Clara, Calif.-based developer and manufacturer of semiconductor products says the Geode chip, which has speed of 266 megahertz, can offer full Web-browsing and play digital video.

The chip consumes little power, eliminating the need for space-consuming cooling fans, National Semiconductor says. The chip will further shrink machines as only a few other chips will be needed for the functions of memory storage and to run high-voltage components.

Cost of information appliances also will be reduced, National Semiconductor says, because of the need for fewer components.

National Semiconductor expects to have its new chip on the market by next summer.

Lucent Unveils Light Beam Technology

Using light beams instead of radio waves, a new wireless technology makes it easier to handle growing Internet traffic without digging up city streets to add fiber-optic cables.

The OpticAir system developed by Lucent Technologies can transmit data 65 times faster than wireless systems that rely on radio waves to carry a signal between rooftops or windows.

Lucent, the former research and equipment arm of AT&T, said Wednesday it expects to begin selling backpack-sized transmitters using the new technology within a year.

In urban areas where it's impractical, if not impossible, to put more cables in the ground, Lucent's system may provide a powerful option for adding capacity to the ''backbone" networks that carry the world's Internet traffic.

''At some point, there's no more capacity in the ground and no more right of way, especially in older metropolitan areas," said Lisa Pierce, an industry analyst for Giga Information Group.

Wireless transmission ''is a lot a cheaper than going the ground route," even if a landlord charged exorbitant rates to put wireless equipment on a rooftop, she said.

There are drawbacks, however, like those with radio-based systems: The laser signal can't travel more than three miles and a direct line-of-sight is required between transmitter and receiver.

And much like a wireless microwave system, OpticAir is not a practical alternative for individual consumers. The equipment involved with either system carries too high a price and far too much data for most people to afford or need.

Recently, demand for Internet capacity has been doubling every three or four months at Uunet, a unit of MCI WorldCom that's one of the biggest backbone operators.

Most of that growth is coming from businesses, although consumers are adding to the demand by subscribing to new high-speed services being offered through cable TV wires and so-called digital subscriber lines using regular copper phone wires.

OpticAir converts data, voice and video information into a laser beam, shooting it through a two-inch wide lens. The signal travels between rooftops or office windows and is then passed back to a fiber-optic cable for the rest of its journey. The system can simultaneously transmit at different wavelengths - or colors - of light, each carrying distinct streams of information.

Global Crossing, a company that has been building and buying fiber-optic systems to create a global network, will be the first company to test the OpticAir system, starting in December.

The capacity provided by the new technology ''could offer a breakthrough method to help our global customers bypass local bottlenecks and offer

leading-edge services," said Wally Dawson, a Global Crossing executive.

Lucent, based in Murray Hill, N.J., said other applications for OpticAir might include sending data across a corporate or college campus, as well as for temporary data links during special events such as live broadcasts of concerts.

Postal Service Tests Online Sales

The U.S. Postal Service plans to allow customers to buy stamps over the Internet and print them directly onto envelopes and mailing labels in a campaign to increase sales among small businesses.

PC Postage marks the Postal Service's first big step into electronic commerce. The program is being tested by a select number of small businesses in California and the Washington, D.C., area.

It could be available nationwide by the end of summer, Patricia Gibert, the agency's vice president for retail sales, said during a demonstration Wednesday.

Rather than individual consumers, the program initially targets an estimated 8 million small business and home office customers who find stamps inconvenient, but don't want to buy or rent a mail metering machine.

''If we make mail easier, people will stick with it longer," Gibert said in an interview.

''We aren't trying to stop the tide of e-mail and it shouldn't be done, but ease of use is a big cost factor," she said. ''You've got to meet the customer where he is."

Tests have been under way for more than a year. They are being conducted by E-Stamp Corp. of Palo Alto, Calif. of Santa Monica, Calif. and two makers of mechanical postage meters, Neopost Inc. of Hayward, Calif. and Stamford, Conn.-based Pitney Bowes Inc.

The systems require customers to purchase stamps in advance using a credit card or debit card. Service fees are expected to run about 10 percent. Customers can purchase stamps for first-class, priority and express mail. Customers can use their own printer to create a postmark and bar code in the envelope's upper right-hand corner.

Typically, the software allows customers to do individual or mass mailings. The Web sites preserve a log of all mailings and a list of stamp prices. And as an option, companies provide digital scales that will weigh larger letters and tell the customer how much postage is needed.

''It's really been great. Now I'm not peeling and sticking stamps," said J. Wingate Greathouse, office manager at Bowles Kendrick & Lemanski Architects in San Francisco, one of the companies involved in the E-Stamp testing.

Wellington Wilson, whose Wellington E-Group is creating an online shopping mall, began testing the Stamps.com product in January. The system worked without a hitch in February, when he used it for a 500-letter mailing.

``The mere fact that I could just run the envelopes through the printer
and fix the postage made it so convenient, the fact that I didn't have to
go to the office and buy $200 worth of stamps," he said.

Final testing has focused on ensuring that the systems offered by each
company is secure against hackers and counterfeiting, Gibert said.

So far, the 1,200 customers involved in testing have purchased more than
$75,000 worth of stamps to send 46,000 pieces of mail.

For now, at least, the system isn't suitable for big companies that send
hundreds or thousands of pieces of mail per day.

For large projects, metering machines are faster and more efficient. Though
that could change if private companies create new software and printers,
there are currently no plans to expand the PC Postage market beyond small
businesses, Gibert said.

``Entrepreneurs being who they are and with the opportunity to take an idea
and expand it, we can see products that might work for larger customers,"
she said.

                                =~=~=~=~=